

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 ADDIS 01716 01 OF 02 131452Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-15 CPR-01 INR-10 PER-01 SP-02 L-03
ISO-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 SY-05 /048 W
-----122746 131541Z /72
O 131156Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8050

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 1716

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP, ET, US
SUBJ: POSSIBLE PERSONA NON GRATA ACTION AGAINST US EMBASSY
OFFICER

REF: ADDIS ABABA 1712

SO THAT DEPT IS COMPLETELY INFORMED OF EVENTS LEADING UP
TO CONTEMPLATED PERSONA NON GRATA ACTION AGAINST POLCOUNS
HERBERT S. MALIN, REPORTED REFTEL, FULL TEXT OF HIS FIRST
PERSON REPORT ON HIS RECENT TRIP TO DESSIE FOLLOWS:

1. SINCE THE TERMINATION OF USIS ACTIVITIES HERE A YEAR
AGO, POL HAS BEEN ATTEMPTING TO RECOVER ALL FILM PROJEC-
TION EQUIPMENT, RADIOS, AND TAPE RECORDERS FROM THE SIX
FORMER USIS READING ROOMS IN PROVINCIAL ETHIOPIAN CITIES.

2. IN FEBRUARY 1978, I TRAVELED TO NEKEMPT FOR THIS PUR-
POSE, AND THE TRIP PASSED WITHOUT INCIDENT. BOTH IN THAT
CASE AND IN OUR RECENT JOURNEY TO DESSIE, I FOLLOWED EX-
ISTING EMBASSY PROCEDURES BY SENDING A DIPLOMATIC
NOTE TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS WELL IN AD-

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PAGE 02 ADDIS 01716 01 OF 02 131452Z

VANCE OF THE TRIP IN ORDER TO INFORM THE PMGSE OF
OUR TRAVEL PLANS. IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY NEGATIVE
RESPONSE, WE THEN PROCEEDED ON THE TRIPS, USING AS
OUR AUTHORITY LETTERS ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF
EDUCATION INSTRUCTING LOCAL OFFICIALS TO RELEASE
THE READING ROOM EQUIPMENT TO US.

3. THE TRIP TO DESSIE TOOK PLACE FROM MARCH 29-31. THE ROAD BLOCKS ON THE WAY UP GAVE NO DIFFICULTY. ON MARCH 30, I CALLED ON THE REGIONAL EDUCATION OFFICER, BEFEKADU MITIKU, WHO TELEPHONED THE READING ROOM INSTRUCTIONS TO INVENTORY AND RELEASE THE EQUIPMENT. WE THEN WENT TO THE READING ROOM, AND WHILE THE EQUIPMENT WAS BEING PACKED INTO THE VAN, I PAYED A COURTESY CALL ON THE DIRECTOR OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL, MEHARI TEKLE-HAIMANOT, WHERE THE READING ROOM WAS HOUSED. THEREAFTER, WE ALSO CALLED ON THE ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF WOLLO REGION, TADESSE TAYE, TOGETHER WITH THE CHIEF OF PUBLIC SECURITY DEPT FOR WOLLO, ESHETU TAFESSE. IN THE AFTERNOON, WE VISITED BRIEFLY THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONER OF POLICE, COL. MERSHA WEDAJO. IN ALL OF THE ABOVE CASES, I WAS ACCOMPANIED BY FSL BOGALE WOLDE-HAWARIAT. FINALLY, I CALLED ON THE POMOA REPRESENTATIVE FOR WOLLO REGION, AKUMA, WHOM I SAW ALONE FOR SOME 75 MINUTES. THE REMAINDER OF THE AFTERNOON WAS DEVOTED TO A VISIT TO THE NEW DESSIE PEDIATRIC HOSPITAL, WHERE WE WERE GIVEN A TOUR OF THE FACILITIES. ALL THOSE I VISITED RECEIVED ME POLITELY, SOME MORE CORDIALLY THAN OTHERS, BUT CERTAINLY NONE SEEMED DISTURBED BY MY PRESENCE OR ACTIVITIES IN DESSIE.

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PAGE 03 ADDIS 01716 01 OF 02 131452Z

4. IN ORDER TO GAIN A HEAD START FOR THE LONG RETURN TRIP THE FOLLOWING DAY, WE DECIDED TO CHECK OUT OF THE DESSIE HOTEL THE EVENING OF MARCH 30 AND DRIVE 23 KM TO COMBOLCHA, WHERE THERE IS AN ITALIAN MOTEL. WE ARRIVED IN COMBOLCHA AT 6:45 P.M., WHERE A POLICE OFFICER WAS WAITING IN THE STREET OBVIOUSLY TO FLAG US DOWN. HE MADE ALL OF US--MYSELF, MY TEENAGE DAUGHTER, ATO BOGALE AND THE ETHIOPIAN DRIVER--GET OUT OF THE VEHICLE AND SHOW IDENTIFICATION. THE AWARJA ADMINISTRATOR, MULUNEH (LNU), THEN CAME UP TO SAY THAT HE HAD INSTRUCTIONS TO SEND US IMMEDIATELY BACK TO DESSIE, WHERE WE WERE TO CHECK BACK INTO THE HOTEL AND NOT LEAVE THE CITY UNTIL CERTAIN MATTERS HAD BEEN CLARIFIED. THIS INSTRUCTION APPARENTLY CAME FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE AND THE PUBLIC SECURITY CHIEF. SINCE IT WAS ALREADY DARK, I POINTED OUT I HAD SPOKEN EARLIER IN THE DAY WITH BOTH OF THESE OFFICIALS AND ASKED TO TELEPHONE THEM TO ASCERTAIN THE DIFFICULTY. ALTHOUGH NEITHER OF THEM WAS STILL IN THE OFFICE, WE WERE ABLE TO CONTACT THE POLICE COMMISSIONER. IN VERY FIRM TONES, HE

INDICATED THAT I WAS ILLEGALLY TRAVELING IN WOLLO BECAUSE I WAS NOT IN POSSESSION OF ANY DOCUMENT FROM THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AUTHORIZING MY TRAVEL. ALTHOUGH THIS WAS A SERIOUS INFRACTION OF ETHIOPIAN LAW, THE COMMISSIONER SAID, IT WAS NOT NECESSARY TO RETURN TO DESSIE THAT EVENING. HOWEVER, MY DAUGHTER AND I WERE NOT TO LEAVE THE MOTEL, WERE NOT TO SPEAK WITH ANY ETHIOPIANS, AND WERE TO LEAVE IMMEDIATELY AFTER BREAKFAST THE FOLLOWING DAY AND DRIVE DIRECTLY TO ADDIS ABABA. WE ADHERED TO THESE DIRECTIONS AND ARRIVED HOME THE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON WITHOUT INCIDENT.

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 01716 02 OF 02 131504Z
ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8051

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 1716

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5. UPON CHECKING WITH OTHER EMBASSIES AFTER OUR RETURN, I DISCOVERED THAT OUR PRACTICE IN NOT SEEKING PERMISSION FROM MOFA FOR TRIPS OUTSIDE OF ADDIS WAS SHARED BY THEM. SEVERAL DIPLOMATS INDICATED THAT THEY HAD BEEN TOLD ORALLY FROM TIME TO TIME FROM PROTOCOL OF THE REQUIREMENT TO OBTAIN ADVANCE PERMISSION IN WRITING, BUT SINCE THESE INSTRUCTIONS HAD NEVER BEEN CIRCULATED TO ANY EMBASSY IN WRITING, NEITHER THEY NOR THE AMERICAN EMBASSY CONSIDER THEM BINDING.

6. ON APRIL 4, FSL BOGALE WOLDE-HAWARIAT WAS AROUSED OUT OF BED AT 6:45 A.M. BY PLAIN CLOTHES REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ADDIS ABABA OFFICE OF PUBLIC SECURITY. HE WAS TOLD TO DRESS AND WAS TAKEN TO THE COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE OFFICE OF PUBLIC SECURITY, WHERE HE

WAS GRILLED AT LENGTH ALL MORNING BY A COLONEL ABEBE. THE COLONEL WANTED TO KNOW EVERY POSSIBLE DETAIL ABOUT THE REASONS FOR THE TRIP, THE PROCEDURES WE HAD TAKEN IN ADVANCE OF THE TRIP, THE PERSONS WE HAD VISITED IN DESSIE, FULL DETAILS OF EVERY CONVERSATION HELD, AND MANY OTHER DETAILS. THE COLONEL INDICATED
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PAGE 02 ADDIS 01716 02 OF 02 131504Z

THAT THE PMGSE'S PRIMARY CONCERN IN THIS CASE WAS NOT WITH BOGALE HIMSELF, BUT WITH THE AMERICAN DIPLOMAT INVOLVED. HE DIVULGED THAT UPON RECEIPT OF THE EMBASSY'S DIPLOMATIC NOTE ANNOUNCING THE PROPOSED TRIP, MOFA FORWARDED THE INFORMATION TO DESSIE. THE DESSIE AUTHORITIES TURNED DOWN PERMISSION FOR THE TRIP AND SO INFORMED MOFA. (MOFA APPARENTLY NEGLECTED TO ADVISE THE EMBASSY OF THIS FACT.) ACCORDINGLY, DESPITE THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION LETTER, I WAS VIOLATING ETHIOPIAN LAW BY TRAVELING TO DESSIE, AND IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT THE DIFFICULTIES OCCURRED IN COMBOLCHA. IN FACT, THE COLONEL SAID, AN ORDER WAS ISSUED FROM ADDIS ABABA TO ARREST THE ENTIRE PARTY ON THE RETURN TRIP, AND HE WAS SOMEWHAT AT A LOSS TO EXPLAIN HOW WE HAD GOTTEN HOME WITHOUT BEING APPREHENDED.

7. AT ONE POINT, THE COLONEL INDICATED THAT THE DRIVER WAS ALSO TO BE PICKED UP FOR QUESTIONING, BUT THIS IN FACT NEVER HAPPENED. AFTER COMPLETING HIS STATEMENT, BOGALE WAS RELEASED THE EVENING OF APRIL 4 AND TOLD TO RETURN THE FOLLOWING MORNING TO SIGN A TYPED VERSION OF THE STATEMENT. THE COLONEL INDICATED THAT THIS WRITTEN STATEMENT WAS TO BE FORWARDED TO THE DIRG UNDER COVER OF A RECOMMENDATION FROM THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC SECURITY AS TO WHAT MEASURES, IF ANY, SHOULD BE TAKEN REGARDING MY ILLEGAL TRIP. TO DATE, WE HAVE HEARD NOTHING FURTHER, EITHER FROM PUBLIC SECURITY OR MOFA.

8. WHEN BOGALE RETURNED TO SIGN THE STATEMENT, THE PUBLIC SECURITY COLONEL WAS MUCH MORE RELAXED THAN ON THE FIRST OCCASION. HE INDICATED THAT FROM
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PAGE 03 ADDIS 01716 02 OF 02 131504Z

PUBLIC SECURITY'S POINT OF VIEW, THE ENTIRE INCIDENT WAS NO MORE IMPORTANT THAT THE FIRST JOINT OF HIS LITTLE FINGER, AND THAT HIS OFFICE WOULD NOT HAVE

MADE SUCH A FUSS IF IT HAD NOT BEEN INSTRUCTED BY THE DIRG TO INVESTIGATE THE INCIDENT.

9. ONCE THE NEWS OF MY DIFFICULTIES GOT AROUND THE DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY, THE QUESTION OF DIPLOMATS' TRAVEL WITHIN ETHIOPIA BECAME AN ACTIVE SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION, SINCE MOST OF THE EMBASSIES HAD HITERTO OPERATED ON THE SAME BASIS AS WE HAD. THE SWEDISH AMBASSADOR IN PARTICULAR HAD ALREADY PLANNED A TRIP TO DESSIE, BUT WAS SPECIFICALLY PREVENTED FROM LEAVING AS SCHEDULED BY THE OFFICE OF PROTOCOL. AS A RESULT, THE EUROPEAN CHIEFS OF MISSION ARE NOW IN THE PROCESS OF TRYING TO PIN DOWN MOFA TO GET THEM TO SPELL OUT EXACTLY WHAT TRAVEL REGULATIONS CURRENTLY OBTAIN FOR DIPLOMATS, AND THE AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR, DEAN OF THE GROUP, IS TO MAKE A REPRESENTATION TO THIS END.

10. COMMENT: PROCEDURE FOLLOWED BY MALIN IN ORGANIZING AND GIVING OFFICIAL ADVANCE NOTICE OF HIS TRIP WERE IN COMPLETE ACCORD WITH GUIDELINES ESTABLISHED BY EMBASSY SECURITY WATCH COMMITTEE AND APPROVED BY AMBASSADOR HUMMEL IN NOVEMBER 1975 AND SUBSEQUENTLY PRACTICED BY BOTH ART TIENKEN AND ME. ON DAY PRIOR TO TRIP, MALIN ALSO DISCUSSED PROBLEMS RELATING TO USIS READING ROOM CLOSURE WITH ACTING MINISTER OF EDUCATION HUSUEIN ISMAIL, WHO INFORMED MALIN THAT DIRG REPRESENTATIVE IN DESSIE RESPONSIBLE FOR WOLLO REGION, A CORPORAL AMBACHEW ATLACHEW, HAD BEEN ADVISED OF TIMING AND PURPOSE OF JOURNEY AND HAD PERSONALLY AUTHORIZED RELEASE OF USIS EQUIPMENT TO MALIN.

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PAGE 04 ADDIS 01716 02 OF 02 131504Z

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